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051614Z Aug 05

UNCLAS OTTAWA 002368

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CANADIAN RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON CLOSING THE GAP
FOR AFGHANISTAN'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 143648

1. (U) Poloff delivered reftel demarche points to Nadia Ahmad, Foreign Affairs Canada Policy Advisor for Afghanistan, and Econoff delivered them to Jonathan Lane, Desk Officer at CIDA. We were told that Canada is fully supportive of making the elections work and will do whatever it can to ensure there is no slippage in dates. They were aware of the shortfall and have begun looking at ways Canada might be able to shift some of its funding for Afghanistan from current programs to additional elections support, on top of the USD \$6.2 million which it has provided. This will have to wait until Minister Carroll returns from travel, which will be in the next week. They hope to have an answer by August 15. Ahmad also mentioned that Canada would be supporting the OSCE electoral observer mission with funding and leadership, and would be supporting the new parliament with technical training and mentoring through the Parliamentary Center, an NGO dedicated to improving the quality of representative assemblies in Canada and abroad.

2. (U) Note: Since the 2002 Tokyo Conference Canada has pledged more than C\$616 million (almost US\$500 million) in reconstruction and development assistance to Afghanistan, making it the single largest recipient of Canadian aid.

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